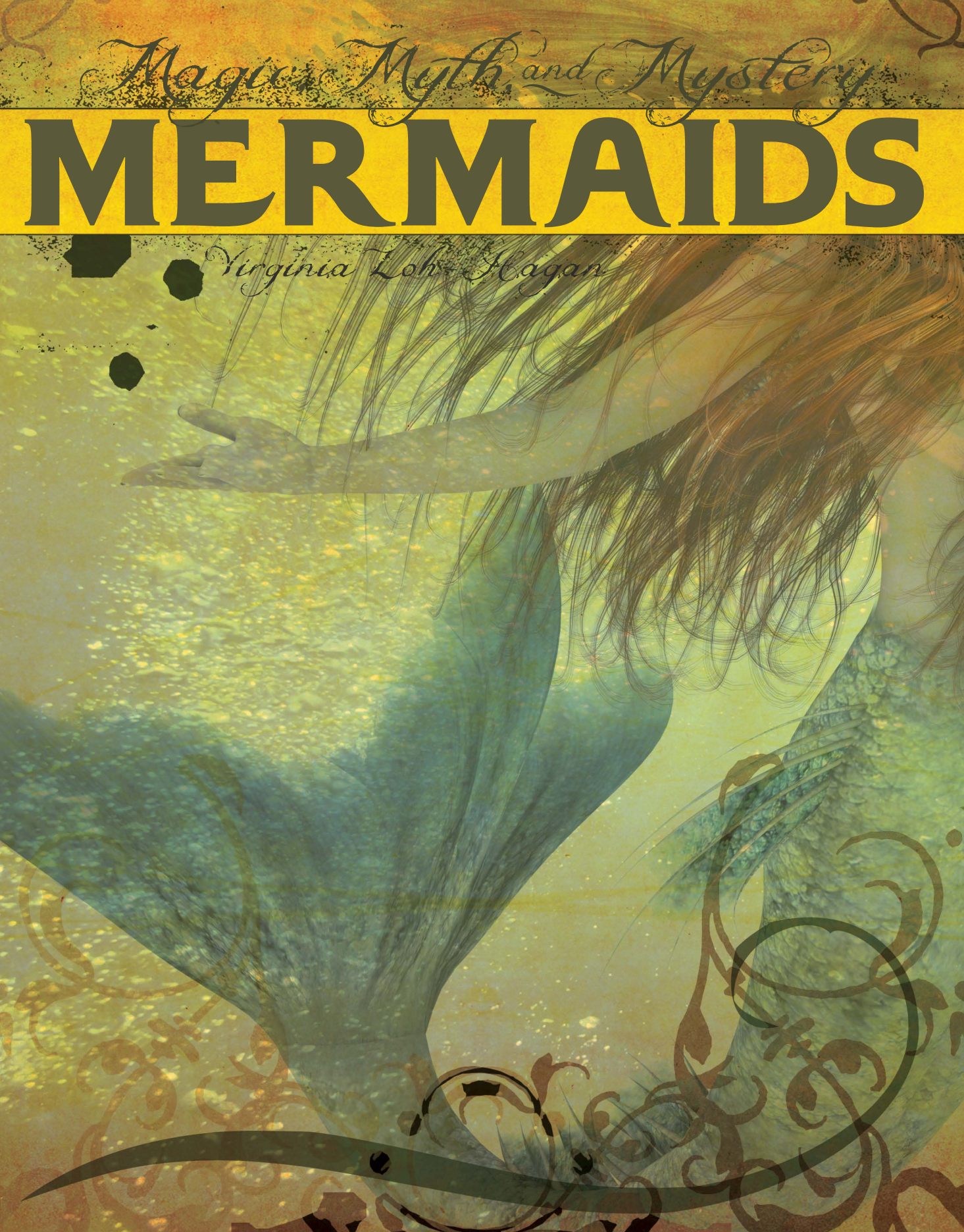
Magic, Myth, and Mystery

MERMAIDS

Virginia Loh-Hagan



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MERMAIDS

DO YOU BELIEVE?

This series features creatures that excite our minds. They're magical. They're mythical. They're mysterious. They're also not real. They live in our stories. They're brought to life by our imaginations. Facts about these creatures are based on folklore, legends, and beliefs. We have a rich history of believing in the impossible. But these creatures only live in fantasies and dreams. Monsters do not live under our beds. They live in our heads!

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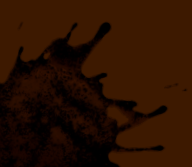

TABLE of CONTENTS

Chapter One
Under the Sea 4

Chapter Two
More Than Swimming Beauties 10

Chapter Three
Managing Mermaids 16

Chapter Four
Mermaid Myths 20

Chapter Five
Fishy Tales 26

Did You Know? 30
Consider This! 31
Learn More 31
Glossary 32
Index 32
About the Author 32

Chapter One

Under the Sea

How are mermaids different from Sirens? What do mermaids look like? What are the different types of mermaids?

"Beware the **Siren**!" Sailors are warned to be careful of Sirens. Sirens are monsters from Greek myths. They're half-women. They're half-birds. They sing beautiful songs. They distract sailors. They kill them.

Mermaids are magical sea creatures. They have a woman's body from their hips up. They have a fish tail. They live in oceans and seas. They live in rivers and lakes.

Mermaids are different from Sirens. But people confuse the two. It's because both creatures tempt

sailors. They're known to bring sailors to their deaths. Siren is another word for a **vamp**. Vamps are women who charm men.

Mermaid *comes from an Old English word.*
Mere *means sea.* Maid *means a young woman.*

Explained by Science!

Water and air are different. Air has 20 times more oxygen than water. Water is heavier than air. Water is thicker than air. This means it takes more energy to breathe in water. Humans have lungs. They can't breathe underwater. Fish can. Fish use gills to breathe. Gills are like hundreds of tiny fingers on curved bars. Water passes through their gills. The gills remove the oxygen for the fish to use. Gills get rid of waste gases. Fish are cold-blooded. This means they need less oxygen. Humans are warm-blooded. Human lungs can't extract oxygen from water. Instead, water fills up lungs. This causes humans to drown.

Some mermaids have more dolphin-like tails.

Mermaids are beautiful. They're young. They carry a mirror. They like to look at themselves. They decorate their bodies. They use things they find in the water. They really like pretty shells.

They have long flowing hair. Their hair looks like sea foam. They carry a comb. They're often seen combing their hair on rocks.

Some have webbed hands. They have large, forked tails. Their tails are longer than legs. They're different colors. Their whole bodies **shimmer**. They shine.

Mermaids live together. Male mermaids are called **mermen**. There aren't many mermen. Together, they're **merfolk**.

Mermaids eat different things. Some eat seafood. Some eat only sea plants. Some eat humans.

There are different types of mermaids. They live all over the world. Most mermaids only live in the sea. They can't go on land.

Some mermaids shed their skins. They go to land. They get dry. Their tails become legs. They can walk on land. But they can only do this for a short time.

Some mermaids are **shapeshifters**. They can change into humans at any time. They can live in water and on land.

Mermaids adapt to the waters they live in.

Glossary

ageless (AYJ-lis) never growing old

aquatic (uh-KWAT-ik) related to water

dehydrated (dee-HYE-dray-tid) losing water, drying up

flattery (FLAT-ur-ee) complimenting for gain

hypnotize (HIP-nuh-tize) to put others in a trance in order to control them

immortal (ih-MOR-tuhl) able to live forever

merfolk (MUR-foke) mermaids and mermen

mermen (MUR-men) male versions of mermaids

shapeshifters (SHAYP-shift-urz) creatures that can change their shapes

shimmer (SHIM-ur) to shine, to glitter

sightings (SITE-ingz) reports of having seen something

Siren (SYE-ruhn) half-woman and half-bird creature from Greek myths that lured sailors to their deaths; another word for vamp

tridents (TRY-dents) three-pronged spears

vain (VAYN) liking how one looks too much

vamp (VAMP) temptress, a woman who seduces men for gain

vulnerable (VUHL-nur-uh-buhl) weak

Index

Andersen, Hans Christian, 26–27, 30

Aquatic Ape Theory, 20–21

Atargartis, 22

lingo, 23

merfolk, 7, 14, 23, 25

mermaids
myths, 20–25
powers, 10–15, 16
real-world connection, 28
and sailors, 4–5, 10–11, 13
sightings, 29
survival tips, 19
weaknesses, 16–19
what they eat, 9, 29
what they look like, 4, 7

mermaids (*cont.*)
where they came from, 20–22, 25

mermen, 7, 18, 22

science, 6

shapeshifters, 9

sirenians, 14

Sirens, 4–5

About the Author

Dr. Virginia Loh-Hagan is an author, university professor, former classroom teacher, and curriculum designer. Her favorite fairy tale is “The Little Mermaid.” She lives in San Diego with her very tall husband and very naughty dogs.

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They lurk in forests and murky, watery depths. They howl at the moon. They drink blood, eat brains, and set curses. They have powers beyond your wildest imagination. The creatures explored in the **Magic, Myth, and Mystery** series will stir your imagination and creep into your dreams—and your nightmares! Beware.

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